

The Chinese Sweet Pomelo.

We find an article in the Pacific Rural Press which describes a fruit that seems to have some very desirable qualities. It may be in cultivation in this state but if so we have not heard of it. It is not offered in any catalogue that we know of, nor is it described in the Cyclopaedia of American Horticulture. If it is one half as good as it is said to be, it certainly ought to be in general cultivation. Has any one of our readers ever seen it? Or do you know anything about it?

Consul Anderson called attention to the pomelo or Chinese bread fruit, a member of the citrus family. In a report from Hangchow on the fruits of China I called attention to the fact that, alone of all Chinese fruits, the pomelo could, in my opinion, be introduced with profit into the United States upon a more extensive scale than it has been. The number of inquiries received both from individuals and from government experiment stations, as a result of that report, shows an extraordinary interest in the subject, and the request for seeds, which cannot be met until the pomelos come in next autumn, promise that something definite will be done about the matter in the United States and Cuba. I understand that the fruit is actually grown in several portions of the United States by a few persons who have introduced it from China themselves, but it is not grown commercially, or at least not upon any great scale. Foreigners agree in declaring that, all things considered, the pomelo is the finest fruit in the Far East. In my opinion it is one of the finest fruits grown, and I would be very glad to see it produced commercially in the United States. It combines the good points of the orange with the good points of the grapefruit. It is more easily handled than the orange, and has not the peculiar bitter quality of the grapefruit. In general description it may popularly be known as a cross between the orange and grapefruit, but it is probable that, if not the original citrus fruit, it is older than either the orange or the grapefruit. Apparently it has been cultivated here in China for at least 2000 years.

It requires ordinarily only three years to grow the tree from seed to bearing period, although, of course, the first year's crop will be very small, and commercially, it will pay to hold back the bearing period at least a year. Its bearing period with ordinary Chinese care probably ranges from twenty to twenty-five years. The tree apparently grows upon any kind of ground, good soil, of course, producing more and better fruit than poor soil; but the habits of the tree require no particular soil or soil conditions.

Climate and soil required.—The best pomelos are grown farther south in the lower portions of Fukien province. This corresponds in latitude with Key West and in winter climate with central and southern Florida, although probably the summers are somewhat warmer. It has much of the characteristics of central and southern Florida and lower coast Texas, but its soil will hardly average as good for citrus fruits as that of the American states mentioned. The best pomelos in the world are said to come from a little valley near Chang Chew, a large Chinese city in the interior from Amoy which has not yet been open to the foreign trade, the village in this valley named Po Nan being the center of the trade in fine pomelos. The pomelos grown there are of exceptionally fine flavor and size and of splendid and showy appearance. They bring high prices. So famous are the pomelos grown there that each year a special tribute of Po Nan pomelos are sent to the Emperor at Peking. The summers in this valley are hot and rather damp. The winter shows considerable frost but practically no freezing. The temperature will often go as low as 28 degrees F. and has

been known to go as low as 25 degrees, although damage was done at that time. The summers are of higher temperature and the winters of lower temperature than Amoy, on an island on the seacoast and of the same latitude. I believe the extremes may fairly be said to be practically the same as those of many valleys in central California.

The pomelo is grown far in the interior of China, having been reported as common by travelers in even the drier portions of Szechuan Province. I believe that it is even more adaptable to climatic differences than the orange, but it would probably do better in a warm and comparatively damp climate like Florida than in the dry atmosphere of California.

Bearing capacity of trees.—The Chinese say that a good-sized tree will ordinarily produce from 600 to 700 pomelos. I have no doubt but that many trees will produce more. When it is considered that many pomelos will run as large as 7 or 8 inches in diameter and even larger, it will be appreciated that such a tree is bearing the load. The fruit is more oval than round. Its color and appearance are those of the grapefruit. The structure and covering also are practically those of the grapefruit, except that the skin and pith padding may average somewhat thicker, and the small globules of juice and fiber or "meat" are more perfectly separated. Each section of the fruit contains a large number of seeds, but the seeds are close together on the inner edge of the section of the fruit and are easily separated from the edible portion without breaking into the juice cells. The Chinese pick their pomelos, as they do all their fruits, too green to get the best results, and often the quality of fruit is poor, simply because it has not been allowed to properly ripen. This premature gathering of fruit probably also interferes with the maintenance of the highest quality of their seedling trees. Many of the producers practice grafting from trees of unusual merit, but the general rule is to raise trees from the seeds. Early picking also prevents the fruit from keeping as long as it otherwise would, but in spite of green picking the fruit will keep for months. We have had pomelos here in March from a crop which ripen in October and November. The Chinese have no particular means of caring for the crop. The pomelos are handled in bags and receive little care. Their keeping qualities naturally could be greatly increased by more careful handling. As it is they are shipped in bags all over China and Japan and to the East Indies, and, in spite of rough usage and more or less bruising, they keep indefinitely, apparently lasting until the demand for them has exhausted the supply. I believe that with modern methods of caring for and shipping the fruit the pomelo would become one of the most popular fruits in the United States.

Cost of a Box of Oranges.

A correspondent of the Pomona Review, a California paper, gives an estimate of the cost of growing oranges on his place. How do the figures compare with your expenses? We should be very glad to publish some figures from Florida growers. Please attend to it before you forget it.

I read with much interest the letter in The Review, the other evening, concerning the actual cost of running a ten-acre lemon grove one year and the actual receipts therefrom. I want to say something about the actual cost of growing a box of oranges: I never knew any orange growers to agree in any respect regarding the actual cost of production of a box of this fruit. Therefore opinions are all at variance with one another as to the actual profit there is in selling oranges at \$1 or \$1.10 a box. How many growers have you heard say, "We can't grow oranges for seventy-five cents a box," or "There's nothing in oranges at a cent a pound?"

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